



# 2011 Military Health System Conference

## The ER “Epidemic” Scope and Intervention Strategies

*The Quadruple Aim: Working Together, Achieving Success*

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# Where Do Pts Go When They're Sick?



- Goal: Determine when, where and why Americans get treatment for acute health problems and flare-ups of chronic disease
- Data sources: three federal surveys of ambulatory care in the United States between 2001 and 2004:
  - National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey of office visits;
  - National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, outpatient department subsample; and
  - NHAMCS emergency department subsample

# What is “Acute Care?”

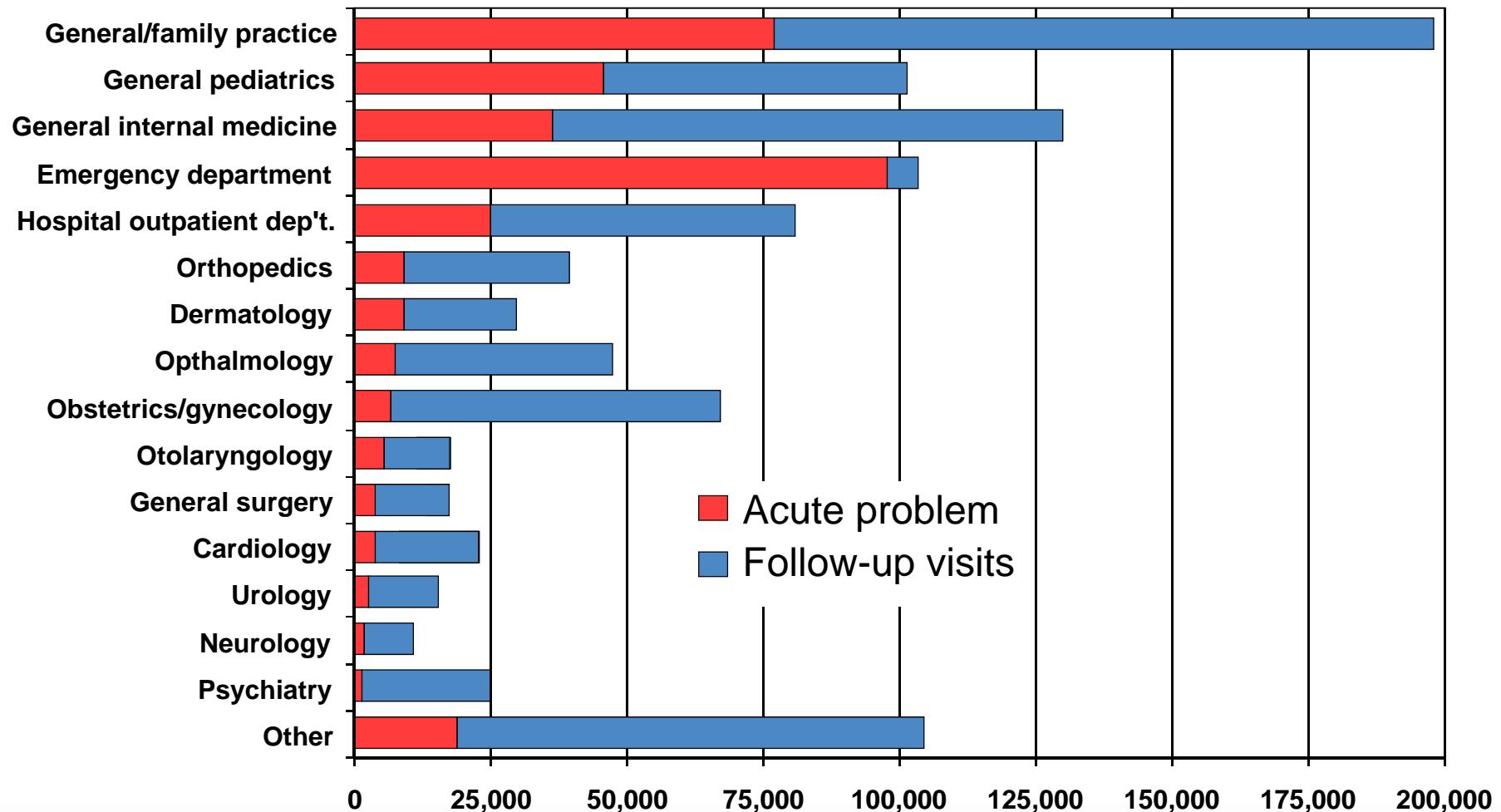


- “Major reason for this visit” coded as “acute” or “chronic disease flare-up” (NAMCS or in the NHAMCS outpatient sample), or
- “Episode of care” coded as “initial” (in NAMCS and either of the NHAMCS subsamples)
- We assumed that no ER physician served as the patient’s “personal physician”

# Two-Thirds of Outpatient Visits in the U.S. are for Non-Acute Care...



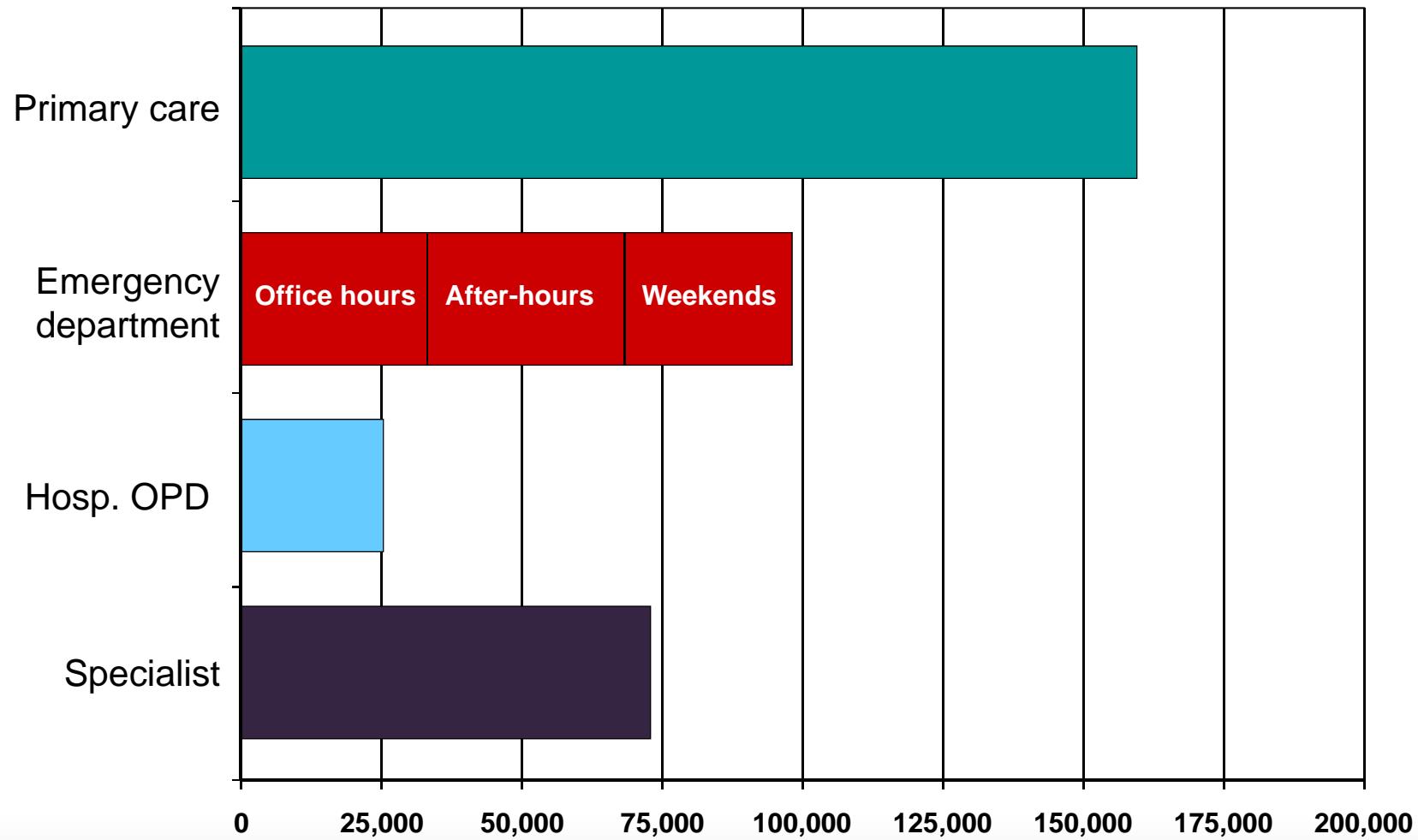
Annual average visits in 1000s, 2001-2004; N=345,000



# A Minority of all Acute Care Visits Involve the Patient's Personal Physician...



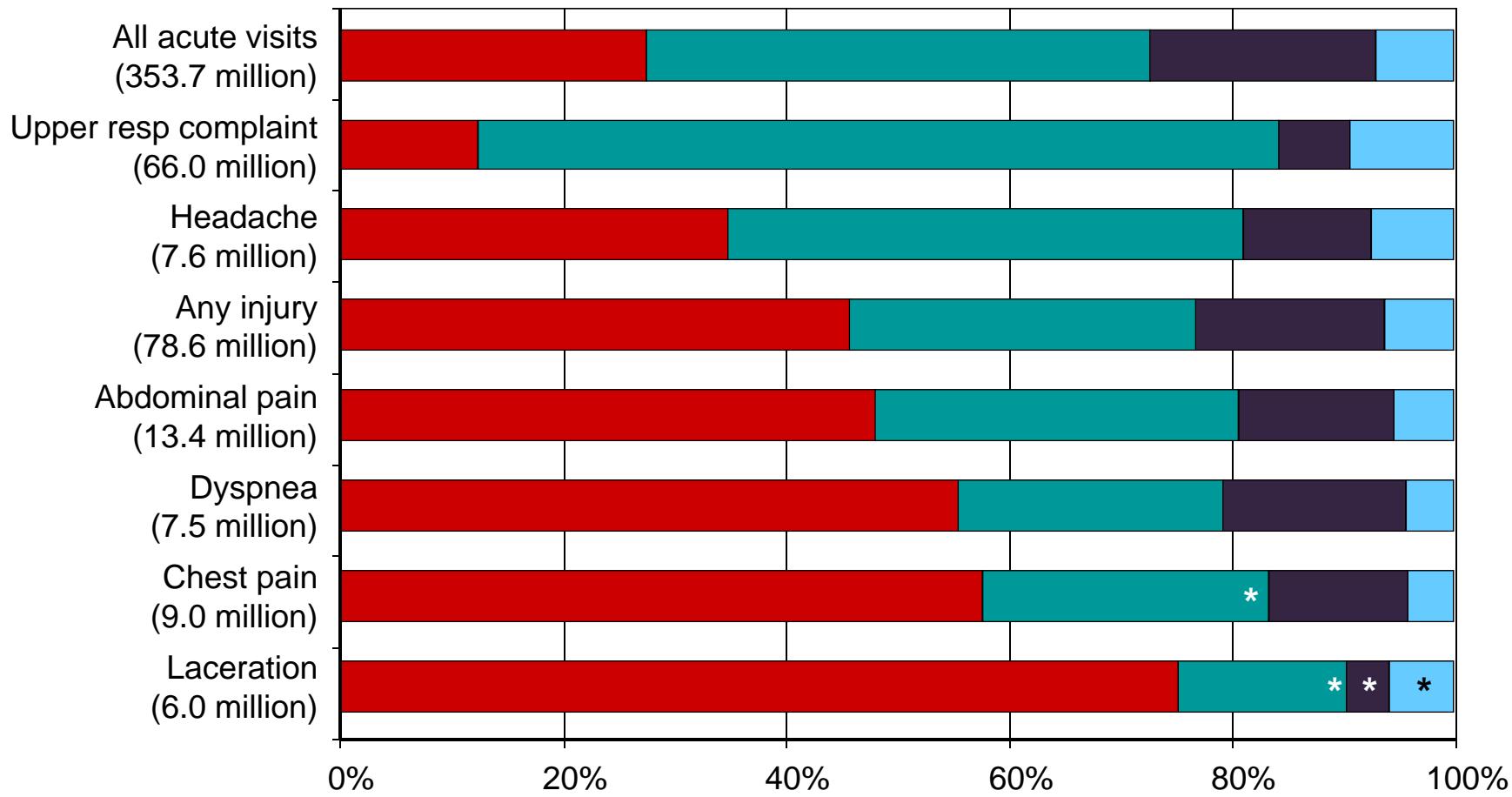
Annual average acute care visits in 1000s, 2001-2004; N=345,000



# Most Acute Care Visits to Primary Care MDs Involve Minor Complaints



■ Emergency department ■ Primary care ■ Specialty ■ Outpatient department

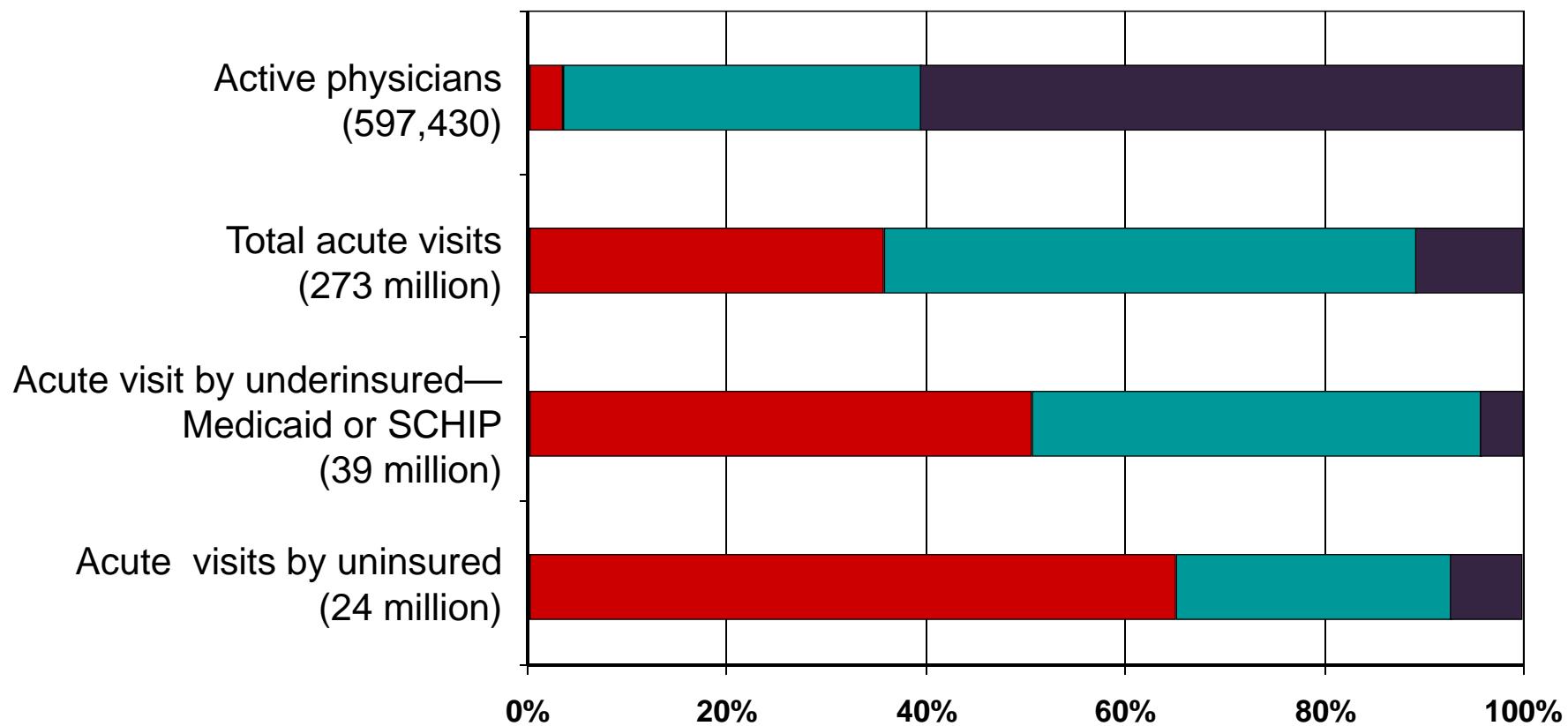


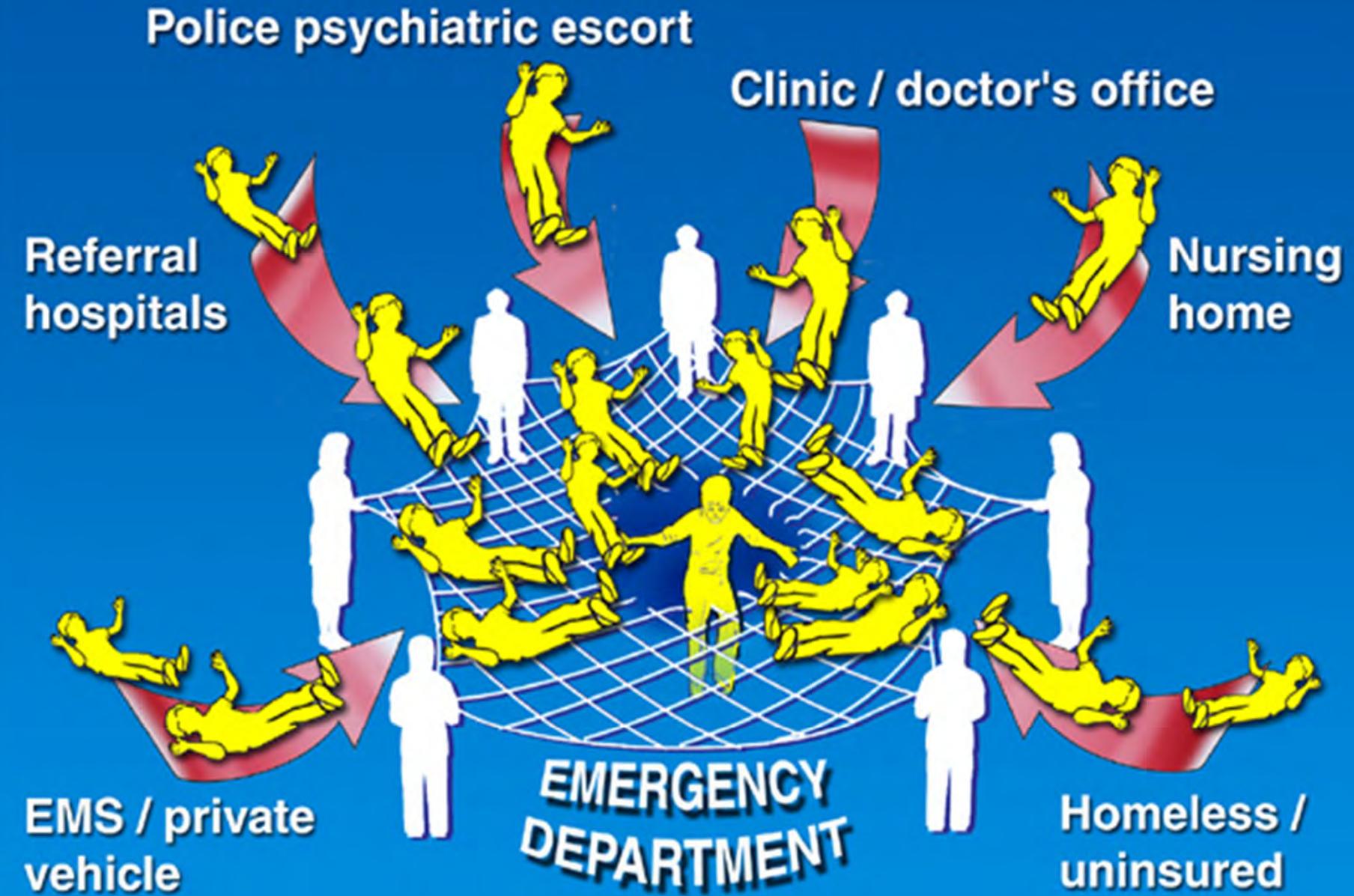
\*Unreliable estimates: std error > 30% of estimate

# ER Docs Disproportionately Care for the Poor & Uninsured



■ ER Docs ■ Primary care ■ Specialty







# What Are the Alternatives?

# Patient-Centered Medical Homes

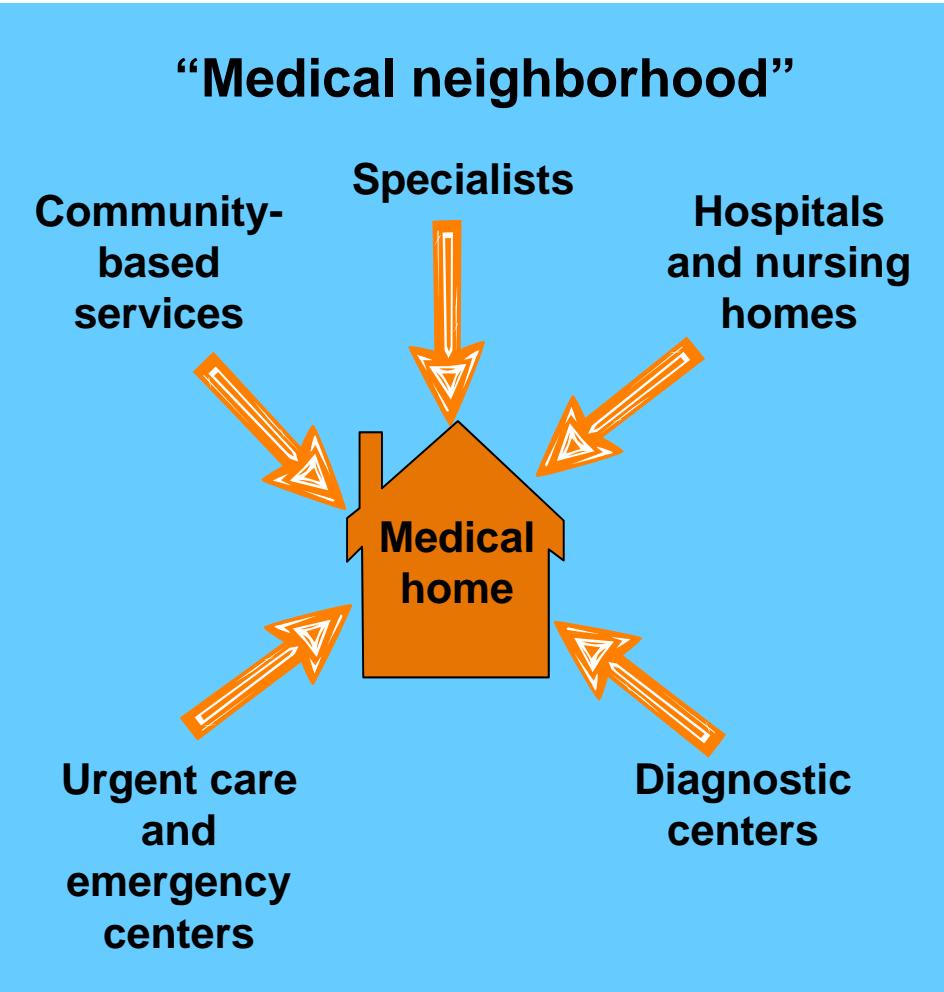


- Envisioned as practices that feature:
  - Clinicians trained to provide first contact, continuous, and comprehensive care
  - A team that takes responsibility for care of their patients—whole-person orientation
  - Care coordinated across all elements of the health care system
  - Provides enhanced access to care





# Accountable Care Organizations



- How quickly will they form?
- Will buy-in be achieved?
- Will enhanced access be part of their agenda?



# Market-Based Strategies



Better information. Better health.



## Consumer-directed care

- Consumers with “skin in the game,” choose from a healthcare marketplace

## Concierge medicine

- An up-market approach to primary care?
- Good for some patients and problems



## Retail clinics & Urgent Care Centers

- Offer expanded hours
- Address a limited scope of problems
- Cheap, but may induce demand

# Marcus Welby, MD: America's Idealized Primary Care Doctor



- ABC medical drama: 1969–1976
- Starred Robert Young and James Brolin
- Dr. Welby reflected the view that primary care physicians are always available when their patients need them



# Thank You



HEALTH